

A rough Draught of a Petition from
Sir John Dalrymple to the House of Commons

Sheweth

That the petitioner being fond of applying Chemistry to the usefull arts of life, discovered a way of making soap from fish particularly Herrings, for which he took out a Patent about two years ago. The execution with the exception of some accidents (to which all new invented arts are subject) succeeded well. But the Petitioner stoped, because the price of Herrings started from £2 to £10 a Ton

In the mean time his principle and experiments with regard to fish soap, led him to two far more important objects, to wit the discovery of a way of Bleaching and washing, by which above 90 per Cent is saved in fuel, above 90 per Cent in soap, and 110 out of 120 parts of pot ash and other fixed alkalis; and large savings are made in the original cost and durability of vessels, in wages, and in acceleration of work: Which discovery he sold to the eminent House of Sterlings and company of London and Glasgow, leaving his reward to themselves without parting at any thing. They gave him for 14 years £1000 a year for one part of the discovery, half the profits on another part, and £100 a year to his operator which the petitioner is informed is the greatest reward that ever was paid by an individual, from the Conquest down to this day for an

invention. They made improvements, took out Patents after opposition before the Attorney General in England and the Lord Advocate of Scotland. And their works are in the greatest prosperity; in so much that with two ^{regular} which consume daily only 420 pounds of coal each, and with ten timber vats, they purify 40,000 yards of meddling cotton or linen goods at one time, and can wash 16,000 shirts in one day, so that the prime cost on the expence of these last would not be two pence a dozen.

Encouraged by these successes, the petitioner extended his views and principles further, into Regions of nature which had never been sufficiently explored before, and to an application of them to arts to which they had never been applied before. In the course of which he discovered that by adding 4 parts of materials (for example 4 pounds) value not 4 farthings to one pound of soft soap already made, or to the materials from which one pound of soft soap is commonly made, the whole would be converted into about 5 pounds of soft black soap in quality equal to common black soap; and that by adding one part of materials (for example one pound) in value not one farthing, to one pound of yellow hard soap already made, or to the materials of which yellow hard soap is commonly made, the whole would be converted into about two pounds of yellow hard soap in quality equal to common yellow hard soap.

And what is still more material (if any thing can be more material in the manufacture of soap) that the secret of the discovery

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new line

can be kept from foreign Nations if Parliament will give its aid. The consequences are four: First to enable the soap boilers to add to each pound of all their black soft soap already made, about 4 pounds additional of Black soap, and to each pound of all their yellow hard soap already made, about one additional pound of yellow hard soap, both of them at a trifling expence. Secondly to give to the British isles a monopoly of the soap business of Europe on account of the cheapness derived from the mixture. Thirdly to give to our west Indian Islands a monopoly of the soap business of the western Hemisphere by carrying soaps already made from Britain, and adding to them in the west Indies the materials alluded to above, which are in great abundance there. Fourthly by the almost incredible cheapness of the soap to present a great source of Revenue not only by a Tax but by withdrawing the drawbacks, which the people would pay not with murmur, but with gratitude to Rulers who could contrive for them, new subjects of saving and even of wealth in objects of new Taxation.

The Petitioner means to pursue the very same ^{course} ~~measures~~ with regard to the public, which he pursued with regard to the house of the Messrs Stirling; that is to convey the discovery to the public, but to leave his reward to Parliament by a per centage upon the increased soap Revenue which may arise from his discovery, but upon a condition that it shall at no time amount to a larger annual sum than Parliament shall

determine; and further that that percentage if Parliament requires it shall not be fixed till the second Session of Parliament after the present (at which time the merit of the discovery great or little will be fully known) unless Parliament shall choose to determine it at an earlier period, and that in the meantime he will communicate his principles and apparatus to persons named by Parliament (the higher thus Characters the more he will be pleased) who may communicate them under oath of secrecy to the most eminent manufacturers in the Kingdom, to report their opinions concerning the advantage to be derived from them; but on this condition that his own servants shall be present at the trials made

The petitioner knows that an application of this sort should go to Parliament sanctioned by Revenue and Commercial departments, who best know financial and manufacturing interests. But he knows also the prodigious hurry of business in which these departments are engaged in time of Parliament; and he confesses he should be sorry that even the present Session should be lost without taking one step or other, upon a matter so important and so new that the petitioner had almost called it the discovery of a new power of nature which none but himself has fallen upon. An expression which he may be excused from using, when at the same time he acknowledges that there has been more of chance than of genius in what he has

found out. But he is now seventy four years of age, and though his health and spirits are he thanks God good, yet he cannot expect that he can make use of them long. In which case his ideas, and what is of far more consequence his experience would perish with him and be lost to the public. He therefore wishes the conduct of the discovery to be put into younger and able hands before he dies. And if Parliament can suggest any condition more fair for the public than those which he has suggested, he will with pleasure agree to them.

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Pt taken by Parliament
Jan J. F. D.
much corrected

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To simplify matters in a
treaty with Wisconsin he informs
that he has already a Patent for
England which he could send
= send to the Treasury or
Parliament tomorrow. The
difference between Sir John's
conducting the discovery, or
the Treasury conducting it,
is, that it is impossible for
an individual to enforce
the keeping of the secret
from foreign Nations, where
= as it is very possible for
the Treasury by aid of
Parliament to enforce it.